

## In Memoriam

## STANLEY HOWARD WAKELY

Stanley Howard Wakely, one of the foremost British microlepidopterists of the twentieth century, died peacefully in hospital on the 5th of May, 1976. He was in his 84th year.

He was born on the 9th of July, 1892 at Strode Mill, Newport, Isle of Wight, and he spent his early years on the island. There he acquired a profound interest in natural history, and in entomology in particular, partly under the tuition of the late H. G. Jeffrey and J. Lobb. He became a printer by profession and was employed as a compositor. After the 1914-1918 war, during which he served in France, his work took him to London and he was obliged to become a town-dweller; yet he always maintained that he could not have been better placed for travel to his favourite collecting localities in the south of England. He never drove a car. Throughout most of his later years he lived in Camberwell but when his wife died in 1975 he and his daughter returned to his well-loved native Isle of Wight and it was there that he died.

Stan Wakely was pre-eminent as a field-worker. His knowledge of botany was extensive and he taught himself to recognise dead and withered plants as well as those that were alive—an invaluable accomplishment, enabling him to find those larvae which feed in roots and stems during the winter months. The breeding of microlepidoptera was his forte and he added extensively to our knowledge of the early stages of many species. L. T. Ford made full use of his knowledge when compiling *A Guide to the Smaller British Lepidoptera*. In 1936, Wakely bred *Opogona antistacta* Meyrick, a species new to science, from a larva found in an imported banana. Other species which he added to the British List include *Paralipsa* [*Aphomia*] *gularis* (Zeller), *Cryptoblates gnidiella* (Millière), *Ancylolomia tentaculella* (Hübner), *Coleophora clypeiferella* Hofmann, *Cydia prunivorana* (Ragonot) [= *Laspeyresia lobarzewskii* Nowicki], *Pammene agnotana* Rebel and *Blastobasis decolorella* (Wollaston). He was probably the first collector to find *Stigmella speciosa* Frey in Britain, since Walsingham's earlier record seems to have been based on a misidentification. Only this year a bred specimen of *Stigmella repentiella* (Wolff) was found in his collection as will be recorded in these pages in due course. The news of this discovery reached him a few days before his death and we are told that it gave him great satisfaction. He was the first collector to rear *Eupithecia millefoliata* Rössler in Britain and he discovered the previously unknown life history of *Sorhagenia janiszewskae* Riedl.

He joined the then South London Entomological and Natural History Society in 1930 and was one of its most loyal and enthusiastic members. He was President in 1942, a member of the Library Committee from 1943 to 1947 and Field Meetings Secretary from 1954 to 1957; he served on and off as a member of Council over a period of 30 years. His Presidential

Address dealt with rare and interesting species of microlepidoptera and he contributed a valuable monograph on the Genus *Mompha* to the Society's Proceedings for 1944-1945.

He submitted many interesting papers to the entomological journals and was a member of the editorial panel of *The Entomologist's Record* from 1959 until his death. Besides articles dealing with the species already mentioned, he wrote several informative papers, sometimes in collaboration with his friends, describing his collecting holidays. These were almost exclusively spent in the south-east of England and he seldom travelled far afield. He possessed a sound knowledge of orders other than Lepidoptera and wrote occasional notes on Orthoptera, Diptera, Hemiptera and Coleoptera for the journals.

During his later years he had several severe disabilities. He found it hard to raise his voice above a whisper which made conversation difficult for him. He suffered from acute curvature of the spine; like the old leech-gatherer Wordsworth once met on the Westmorland moors,

"His body was bent double, feet and head  
Coming together in life's pilgrimage."

Much of the last year of his life was spent in hospital owing to Parkinson's Disease. All this suffering was borne with exemplary fortitude. When failing health compelled him to give up collecting in about 1970, he presented his collection to Cambridge University. It is housed in the Insect Room at the Department of Zoology in Downing Street where it is available for study.

Stanley Wakely was concerned that his extensive knowledge of microlepidoptera should outlive him and was never happier than when he was helping or instructing younger or less experienced entomologists. Both the authors of this obituary are deeply indebted to him for ungrudging tuition and guidance and for happy days spent collecting in his company.

Though his life centred on entomology and he used to say that he would have advanced further in his profession if he had not subordinated it to his hobby, he also had other interests. These included beagling and hunting. In early life he used to hunt with the Isle of Wight Harriers and walk their puppies. During his London days many winter Saturdays saw him travelling by train to a meet in the country and following hounds on foot. His interest in the sport lay in the study of techniques and the way in which hounds work: it was an extension of his involvement in natural history.

His gentle and likeable personality will be sadly missed by his wide circle of friends and our sincerest sympathy is extended to his daughter, Miss Margaret Wakely.

A.M.E.  
J.M.C.-H.

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